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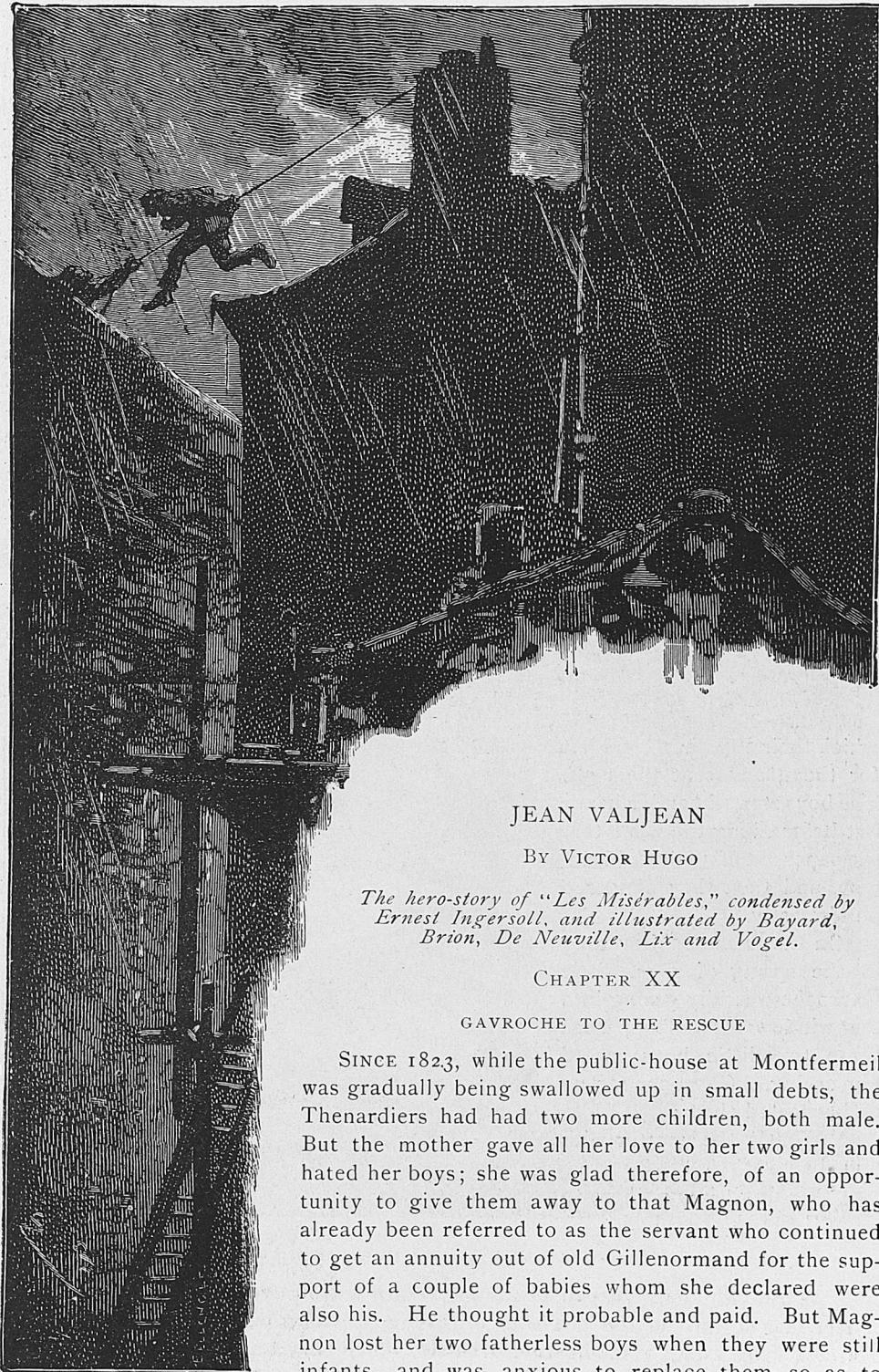
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JEAN VALJEAN

BY VICTOR HUGO

The hero-story of "Les Misérables," condensed by Ernest Ingersoll, and illustrated by Bayard, Brion, De Neuville, Lix and Vogel.

CHAPTER XX

GAVROCHE TO THE RESCUE

SINCE 1823, while the public-house at Montfermeil was gradually being swallowed up in small debts, the Thenardiers had had two more children, both male. But the mother gave all her love to her two girls and hated her boys; she was glad therefore, of an opportunity to give them away to that Magnon, who has already been referred to as the servant who continued to get an annuity out of old Gillenormand for the support of a couple of babies whom she declared were also his. He thought it probable and paid. But Magnon lost her two fatherless boys when they were still infants, and was anxious to replace them so as to



MAGNON'S WARDS

which their "mother" had left for them, and sent them off. The boys started hand in hand; but before long the wind tore the paper out of their cold fingers, and then they wandered on aimlessly.

On that same cold evening in the spring of 1832, little Gavroche was idly gazing into the windows of a shop, when these two little boys passed him crying. Gavroche ran up and accosted them:

"What's the matter with you, babes?"

"We don't know where to sleep," the elder replied.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche. And assuming an accent of tender affection and gentle protection, he said—

"Come with me, brats."

keep the annuity going, for Gillenormand would know no difference.

Thus the little Thenardiers became the little Magnons, and Mlle Magnon went to live in the Rue Cloche-Percée with an English woman always called *Mamselle Miss*. The children were well treated, and lived there happily enough for several years, when all at once, immediately following the affair in the Jondrette garret, their protectors were arrested. The children were playing in the back yard, and knew nothing of the raid; but presently a cobbler, opposite the house, called to them, gave them a paper with an agent's address,



GAVROCHE AS A PROTECTOR

"Yes, sir," said the elder boy; and the two children followed him and left off crying.

"Then you haven't either father or mother?" Gavroche continued magisterially.

"I beg your pardon, sir; we have a papa and a mama, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that is better than knowing," said Gavroche, who was a philosopher in his small way.

Finding a sou in some recess of his clothes, he bought for each of them a lump of bread, and they walked on eating it and telling their simple story.

Twenty years back there might have been seen in the southeastern corner of the square of the Bastile, near the canal-dock, dug in the old moat of the citadel-prison, a quaint monument. It was an elephant, forty feet high, constructed of carpentry and masonry, bearing on its back a castle which resembled a house. It was falling into ruins. On coming near this colossus Gavroche went through a hole in the fence around the square, and the children, a little frightened, followed without a word. A workman's ladder was lying along the palings, and Gavroche dragged it underneath the elephant, set it upright against a foreleg, and running up disappeared into a black hole in the belly of the mammoth. A moment afterwards the boys saw his head and heard his voice. The elder climbed the rungs slowly and was hauled into this singular retreat. Then Gavroche went down and helped the smaller brother, and soon all three were together at the top, whereupon Gavroche kicked over the ladder and then covered the hole with a board. This done Gavroche again plunged into the darkness, and the children heard the fizzing of a match dipped into a bottle of phosphorus, as was the old method before lucifer matches were invented.



GAMINS



THE WAIFS IN THE BREAD-SHOP

Gavroche had lighted a rope's-end dipped in pitch, and this torch, rendered the inside of the elephant indistinctly visible. Gavroche's two guests looked around them, and had

such a feeling as Jonah must have experienced in the interior of the biblical whale. An entire gigantic skeleton was visible to them; above their heads a long brown beam, from which sprung at regular distances massive cross-bars, represented the spine with the ribs, stalactites of plaster hung down like viscera, and vast spider-webs formed from one side to the other dusty diaphragms. The two lads began looking round the apartment with terror, but Gavroche did not allow them any leisure to learn new causes for alarm.

"Quick," he said.

And he thrust them toward what we are very happy to call the end of the room, where his bed was, surrounded by a sort of tent of wire-netting to keep the rats away from him when he slept. Gavroche's bed was perfect; that is to say, there was a mattress, and a wide coverlet of coarse gray wool, enough to wrap all three in, when they lay down.

"Listen to me," Gavroche lectured them, when they had begun to get warm, and somewhat over the terror which this gruesome cavern and the sight of the

spiders and sound of the scrambling of the rats had upon their infant minds. "You must never blubber for anything. I'll take care of you, and you'll see what fun we shall have. In summer we'll go to the Glacière with Navet, a pal of mine; we'll bathe in the dock, and run about naked on the timber-floats in front of the bridge, for that makes the washer-women ferocious. We'll go and see the skeleton-man, at the Champs Elysées, and then I will take you to the play; I get tickets, for I know some actors, and even performed myself once in a picce; we were a lot of boys who ran about under a canvas, and that made the sea. We will go and see the savages, but they ain't real savages, and

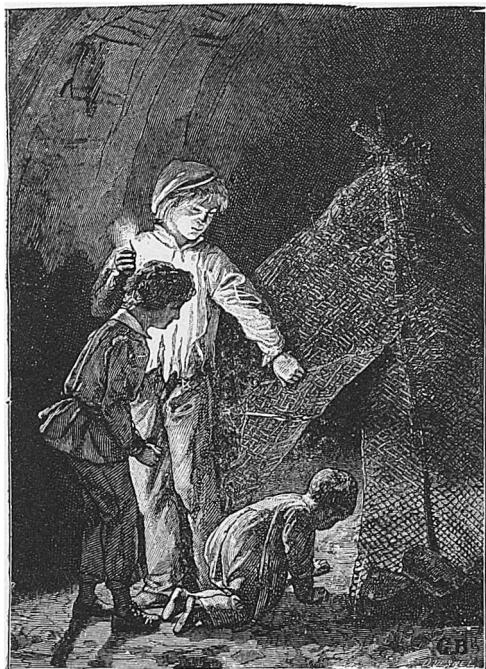


THE ELEPHANT OF THE BASTILLE

then, we will see a man guillotined, and I'll point out the executioner to you."

The night hours passed away; a winter wind, mingled with the rain, blew in gusts; the patrols examined doors, inclosures, and dark corners, and, while searching for nocturnal vagabonds, passed silently before this elephant which sheltered from the sky and rain three poor sleeping children.

Toward the end of the hour which immediately precedes day-break, a man



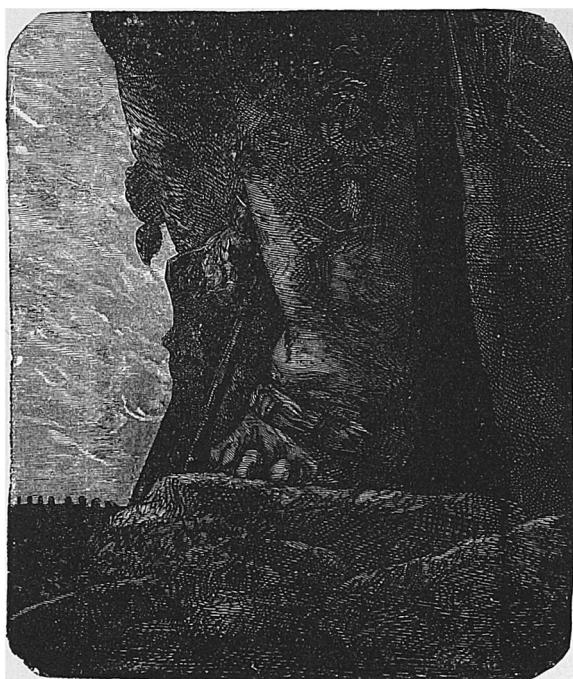
GAVROCHE'S WIRE BED-ROOM

the others, help from without, had managed to escape from his separate prison, but failing to get down from the roof, to which he had made his way, by the means he had expected, he had crawled out upon a great ruined wall that extended from the prison—no one knows just how or with what hope. It was now three in the morning, and Thenardier, wet through with rain, his clothes in rags, his hands, elbows and knees bleeding, was lying at full length on the top of the wall, where his strength had failed him. He was suffering from the dizziness of a probable fall and the horror of a certain arrest; and his mind, like the clapper of a bell, went from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I remain."

In this state of agony he suddenly saw in the dark street

slipped through the palings and on getting under the elephant uttered a peculiar cry. At the second cry a clear young voice answered, "Yes!" Almost immediately a lad slid down the elephant's leg and fell at the man's feet. It was Gavroche, and the man was Montparnasse, who confined himself to saying: "We want you; come and give us a lift." The gamin asked for no other explanation. "Here I am," he said, and the pair proceeded toward the Rue St. Antoine, where Babet, who had escaped from La Force that morning, was waiting for them, and where they were presently joined by Brujon and Guelemer, who had got out of the decrepit old prison that same night by means of a perilous journey over the roofs, by jumping from one to another and sliding down a rope which the scoundrels had managed to make, bit by bit.

Thenardier also, having had, like



THE SUMMONS AT MIDNIGHT

a man, who glided along the walls and came from the Rue Pavée, stop in the gap over which Thenardier was, as it were, suspended. This man was joined by a second, then by a third, and then by a fourth. When these men were together, all four entered the enclosure, and stood exactly under Thenardier who, unable to distinguish their faces, listened to their remarks with the desperate attention of a wretch who thinks himself lost. He felt something like hope when he recognized the voices of Brujon and Babet. In a moment they would be gone. Thenardier gasped. He did not dare call to them, but he took from his pocket the end of a rope which he had found tied to, and had detached from the chimney of the new building, where his pals had left it, and threw it at their feet.

THENARDIER ON THE WALL

"My cord!" said Brujon, who had left it there when he got down.

"The landlord is there," exclaimed Montparnasse. They raised their eyes and Thenardier thrust out his head.

"Quiet," Montparnasse called; "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

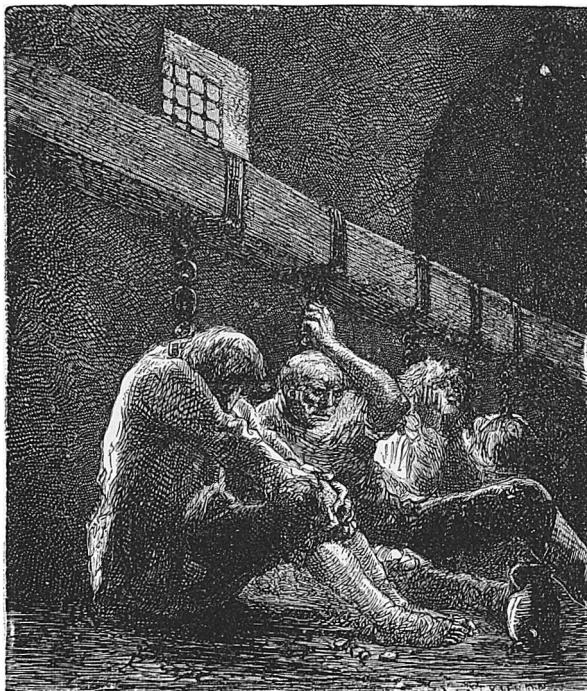
"Yes."

"Fasten the ends together, we will throw the rope to him, he will attach it to the wall, and it will be long enough for him to come down."

Thenardier ventured to lift his voice. "I cannot stir," he explained to them.

"You will slip down, and we will catch you. Only just fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

CONDEMNED PRISONERS IN THE OLD CHATELET OF PARIS,
AWAITING TRANSPORTATION TO THE GALLEYS

‘One of us must go up,’ said Montparnasse, after a long study of the situation. An old plaster pipe, which had served as a chimney for a stove formerly lit in the hut, ran along the wall almost to the spot where Thenardier was lying.

‘By that pipe?’ Babet exclaimed; ‘a man? oh, no, a boy is required.’

‘Yes, a boy,’ Brujon said in a strongly affirmative tone.

‘Wait a minute,’ Montparnasse said, ‘I have it.’

He gently opened the hoarding door, went out, and ran off in the direction of the Bastile. Seven or eight minutes elapsed,—eight thousand centuries for Thenardier; the door opened again, and Montparnasse came in, panting and leading Gavroche. The rain was dripping from his hair and Guelemer growled at him:

‘Brat, are you a man?’

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders and replied,—

‘What do you want of me?’

‘Climb up that pipe with this rope and fasten it to the crossbar of the window at the top of the wall.’

The gamin examined the rope, the chimney, the wall, and the window, gave that indescribable and disdainful smack of the lips which signifies, ‘Probably you think I can’t do it—but you’ll find yourself mistaken!’ and took off his shoes.

‘There is a man up there whom we will save,’ Montparnasse continued.

Guelemer seized Gavroche by one arm, placed him on the roof of the pent-house, and handed him the rope. The gamin turned to the chimney,



THE RESCUE OF THENARDIER

which it was an easy task to enter by a large crevice close to the roof. At the moment when he was going to ascend, Thenardier leaned over the edge of the wall; the first gleam of day whitened his dark forehead, his livid cheek-bones, his sharp savage nose, and his bristling gray beard, and Gavroche recognized him.

‘Hilloh!’ he said, ‘it’s my father; well, that won’t stop me;’ and taking the rope between his teeth he resolutely commenced his ascent.

He reached the top of the wall, straddled across it, and securely fastened the rope to the topmost cross-bar of the window. A moment after, Thenardier was

in the street; so soon as he touched the pavement, so soon as he felt himself out of danger, he was no longer wearied, chilled, or trembling; the terrible things he had passed through were dissipated like smoke, and all his strange and ferocious intellect was re-aroused and found itself erect and free, ready to march onward. He said not a word nor gave a glance at the boy, who stole away.

CHAPTER XXI

ENCHANTMENT AND DESOLATION

THE reader has, of course, understood that Eponine, on recognizing through the railings the inhabitant of the house in the Rue Plumet, to which Magnon sent her after getting the message from the prisoners, began by keeping the bandits aloof from the house, then led Marius to it; and discovered that, after several days of ecstasy before the railings, Marius had eventually entered Cosette's garden, as Romeo did Juliet's.



ESCORTING THE TREASURES OF FRANCE

"By whom were the carriages, containing the wealth of the Tuilleries, escorted in 1818? By the rag-pickers of the Faubourg St. Antoine. Tatters mounted guard over the treasure, and virtue rendered these ragamuffins splendid. In these carts, in barely closed chests—some, ind-ed, still opened—there was, amid a hundred dazzling cases, that old crown of France, all made of diamonds, surmounted by the royal carbuncle and the Regent diamonds worth 30,000,000 francs. Barefooted, they guarded this crown."

V. H.



From that blessed hour Marius went to the garden every night. If, at this moment, Cosette had fallen in love with an unscrupulous libertine she would have been lost, but she did not. Cosette was happy and Marius satisfied. They lived in that ravishing state which might be called the bedazzlement of a soul by a soul.

What passed between these two lovers? Nothing, they adored each other. At night, when they were there, this garden seemed a living and sacred spot. All the flowers opened around them and sent them their incense; and they opened their souls and spread them over the flowers. It was quite simple that Marius, as he adored, should admire. Woman feels and speaks with the infallibility which is the tender instinct of the heart. No one knows like a woman

how to say things which are at once gentle and deep. The most sovereign symptom of love is a tenderness which becomes at times almost insupportable. And by the side of all this—for contradictions are the lightning sport of love—they were fond of laughing with a ravishing liberty, and so familiarly that, at times, they almost seemed like two lads. Still, even without these two hearts intoxicated with chastity being conscious of it, unforgettable nature is ever there, ever there with its brutal and sublime object, and whatever the innocence of souls may be, they feel in the

most chaste *tête-à-tête* the mysterious and adorable distinction which separates a couple of lovers from a couple of friends.

Cosette and Marius lived vaguely in the intoxication of their madness, and they did not notice the cholera which was decimating Paris in that very month. They had made as many confessions to each other as they could, but they had not extended very far beyond their names. Marius had told Cosette that he was an orphan, Pontmercy by name, a barrister, but gained a livelihood by writing things for publishers; that his father had been a colonel,—a hero—and all the rest of his story. He even remarked incidentally that he was a baron, but this produced little effect upon the girl. On her part she told him all of the facts of her life that she knew. Jean Valjean suspected nothing, for Cosette was gay, and that



ENCHANTMENT AND DESOLATION

sufficed to render the old man happy. Cosette's thoughts, her tender preoccupations, and the image of Marius filled her soul. She was at the age when the virgin wears her love as the angel wears its lily. Jean Valjean was, therefore, happy; and, besides, when two lovers understand each other, things always go well, and any third party who might trouble their love is kept in a perfect state of blindness by a number of precautions, which are always the same with all lovers. Jean Valjean did not even remember that young man of the Luxembourg existed.

Marius never set foot in the house when he was with Cosette; they concealed themselves in a niche near the steps, so as not to be seen or heard from the street, and sat there, often contenting themselves with the sole conversation of pressing hands twenty times a minute. At such moments, had a thunderbolt fallen within thirty feet of them, they would not have noticed it. Still various complications were approaching. One evening as Marius was going to the rendezvous, and was turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one say, close to him—"Good-evening, Monsieur Marius."

He raised his head, and recognized Eponine. This produced a singular effect: he had not once thought of this girl since the day when she led him to the Rue Plumet. He owed her his present happiness, and yet it annoyed him to meet her and be reminded of that unpleasant fact.

"Ah, is it you, Eponine?"

"Why do you treat me so coldly? Have I done you any injury?"

"No," he answered, and did his best to disguise any repugnance he felt.

Certainly he had no fault to find with her; on the contrary. Still he felt that he could not but say "you" to Eponine, now that he said "thou" to Cosette. As he remained silent, she exclaimed—"Tell me"—then she stopped and looked

down on the ground; "Good-night, Monsieur Marius," and was gone.

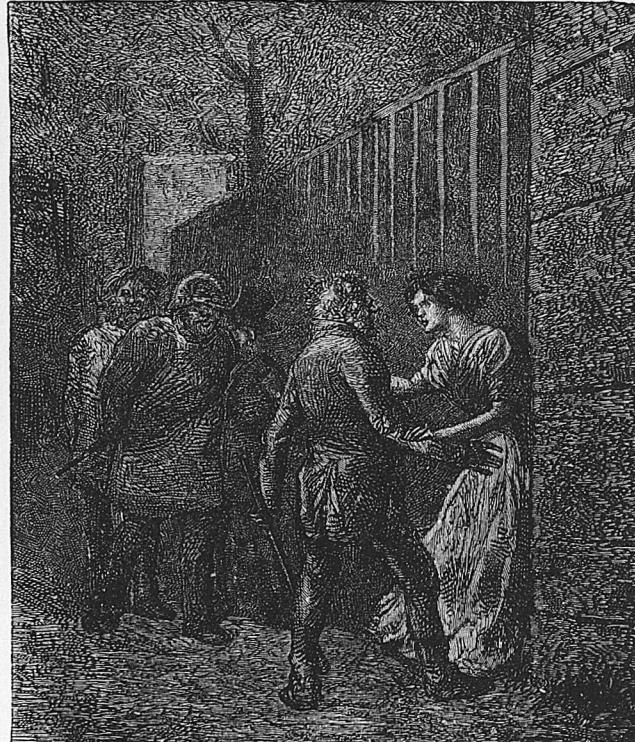
The next night she watched for him, and following saw him enter the garden, whereupon she crept up and sat down on the stonework of the railing in a dark corner. She was listening, and it would have been wonderful to her acquaintances to have seen her face.

Suddenly six men, who were walking separately, stealing along under the shadow of the walls, gathered near her and stopped. She knew them and heard their talk about the house; but when they made a movement to enter the fence, she suddenly confronted them.

For a long time they



MARIUS BY DAY



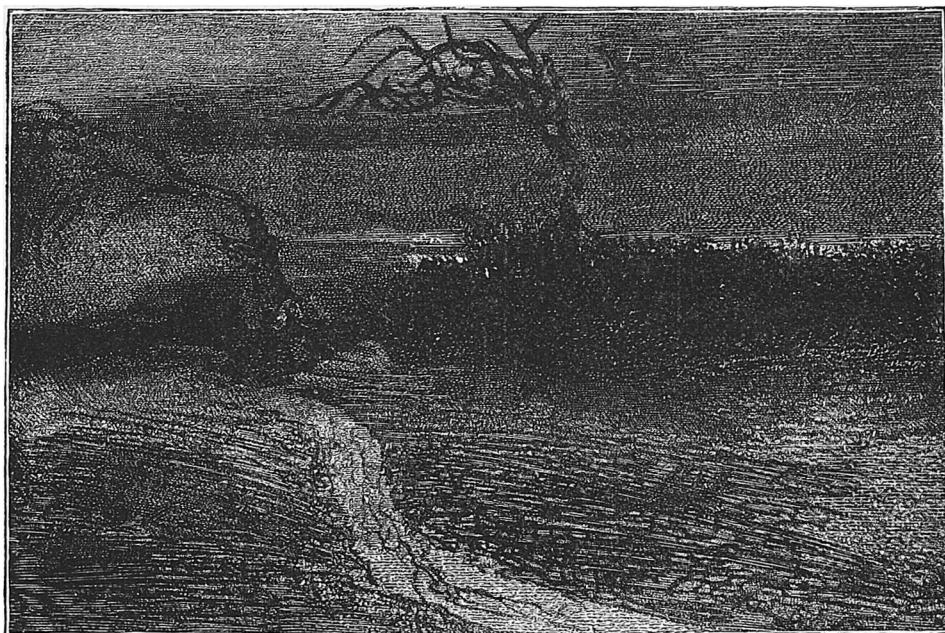
EPONINE DEFIES PATRON MINETTE

cajoled and threatened—these six ruffians of the Patron Minette whom the reader knows so well; but she scorned her life and they knew it, and nothing could persuade or frighten her into permitting them to carry out their plan; and at last they gave it up and disappeared. This was June 3, 1832,—a date to be remembered.

While this sort of human-faced dog was mounting guard against the railing, and six bandits fled before a girl, Marius was by Cosette's side. The sky had never been more star-spangled and more charming, the trees more rustling, or the smell of the grass more penetrating; never had the birds fallen asleep beneath the frondage with a softer noise; never had Marius been more enamored, happier, or in greater ecstasy. But he had found Cosette sad, she had been crying, and her eyes were red. Marius's first remark was—"What is the matter with you?"

Then while he took his seat, all trembling, by her side, she continued—

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness for a journey, for he had business to attend to, and that we were probably going away at once."

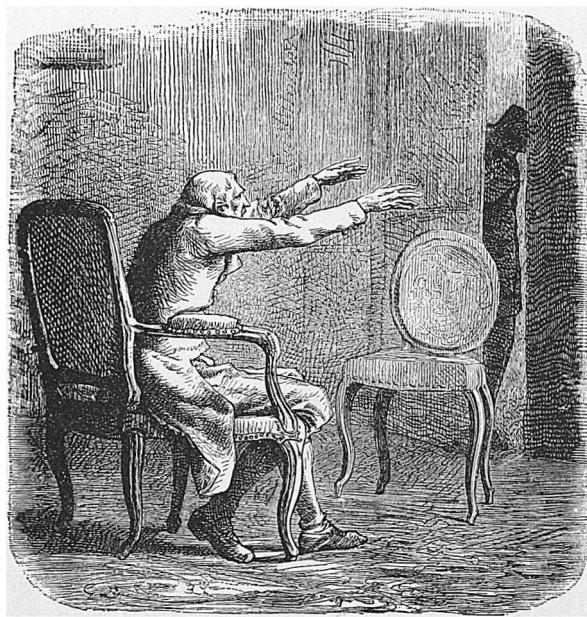


THINGS OF THE NIGHT

Marius shuddered from head to foot. When we reach the end of life, death signifies a departure, but at the beginning, departure means death. For six weeks past Marius had slowly and gradually taken possession of Cosette; it was a perfectly ideal, but profound, possession, and it is certain that, at this moment, in Marius's mind, no abuse of power, no violence, no abomination of the most prodigious tyrants, no deed of Busiris, Tiberius, or Henry VIII, equalled in ferocity this one—M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter away from Paris because he had business to attend to! He asked in a faint voice—

"And when will you start?"

"He did not say when—but I think it will be soon; and we go to England."



MARIUS FAILS TO MOVE HIS GRANDFATHER

stammered — “ What do you mean? ”

Marius looked at her, then slowly raised his eyes to heaven. When he looked down again he saw Cosette smiling at him.

“ How foolish we are! Marius, follow us if we go away! I will tell you whither, and you can join me where I am. ”

Marius was now a thoroughly wide-awake man, and had fallen back into reality; hence he cried to Cosette —

“ Go with you! are you mad? Why, it would require money, and I have none. Go to England! why I already owe more than ten louis to Courfeyrac, one of my friends. Cosette, I am a wretch. You only see me at night and give me your love: were

“ And when will you return? ”

“ He did not tell me. ”

Then Marius rose and said coldly — “ Will you go, Cosette? ”

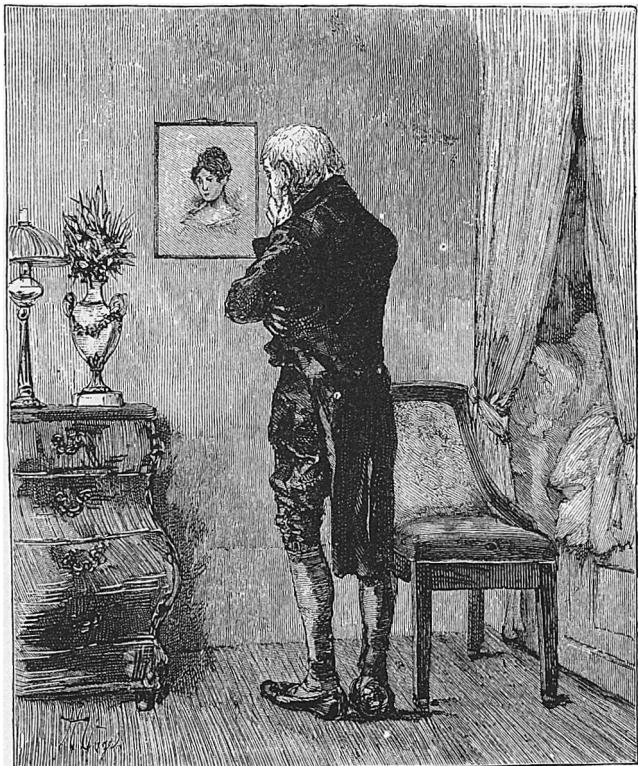
Cosette turned to him, her beautiful eyes full of agony, and answered, with a species of wildness — “ What can I do? ”

“ So you are determined to go? ”

Cosette seized Marius's hand, and pressed it as her sole reply.

“ Very well, ” said Marius, “ in that case I shall go elsewhere. ”

Cosette felt the meaning of this remark even more than she comprehended it. She



OLD GILLENORMAND REFLECTS

you to see me by day you would give me a sou, and perhaps a smile, for charity."

He threw himself against a tree, with his arms over his head and his forehead pressed to the bark, and remained for a long time in this state. At length he turned and heard behind him a little stifled, soft and sad sound; it was Cosette, sobbing.

What could happen? He began to talk to her again, and after a time let her know that she need not expect to see him until the second night. Then he scratched his address, 16 Rue de la Verrerie, on the plaster of the house-wall.

Marius in his desperation had formed the idea of appealing to his grandfather, who, now 91 years old, still lived in the same house with Mlle Gillenormand, who had been unable, however, to ingratiate Theodule, the lancer, into her father's good opinion. He still pretended the greatest fury against Marius, but really was longing for his return.

On the next night, June 4, old Gillenormand was sitting in his library, when Marius was announced.

The old man really longed to throw himself into the young man's arms; but to conceal this he became so rough that Marius was utterly crushed, and showed himself in the worst possible light. At last he stammered forth his request—permission to marry. This threw the old gentleman into a real fury, and his violence aroused the house, while his insults sent Marius away in a rage. He had told his grandfather her name, had poured out her praises, had humbled himself, only to be shamefully abused and insulted by a wicked old roué. So he felt, as, with the stern "Never!" ringing in his ears, he had rushed from the house.

The instant he was gone old Gillenormand relented. He had not expected such resistance. He roared at the servants who had let Marius go, and shouted out of the window to recall him, but it was too late. Marius, with a heart full of rage and misery, was already out of hearing.

That same afternoon, Jean Valjean was seated in the Champ de Mars, study-



THE MESSAGE FROM OVER THE WALL



A PLIGHTED TROTH

his head; he opened it and read the words,—*Leave your house.*

Jean Valjean rose smartly and perceived a slight person, in boy's clothes, slipping down into the moat. Then he went home very pensive.

Jean Valjean's purse was useless to M. Mabœuf, who, in his venerable childish austerity, had not guessed that what "fell from heaven," as Mother Plutarch had thought, came from Gavroche. Hence he carried the purse to the police commissary of the district, as a lost object. One thing after another failed, book after book was sacrificed, until finally there was nothing left to sell, no decent clothes to wear, nothing to eat.

At dawn of this 5th of June he seated himself on the overturned post in his garden, and he might have been seen the whole morning, motionless with drooping head. In the afternoon extraordinary noises broke out in Paris. Father Mabœuf raised his head, noticed a gardener passing, and said—"What is the matter?"

The gardener replied, with the spade on his back, and with the most peaceful accent—"It's the rebels over by the arsenal."

"Why are they fighting?"

"The Lord alone knows," said the gardener.

Father Mabœuf went into

ing over his situation. Paris was seething with political troubles, and the police were suspicious and extra alert. He had discovered that Thenardier was free and prowling about that quarter—a source of constant danger. He had been alarmed that very morning by finding mysterious words scratched in the plaster of his garden-wall,—"16 Rue de la Verrerie." In the midst of these troubled thoughts a folded paper fell on his knees, as if a hand had thrown it over



THE MYSTERIOUS INSCRIPTION

his house, took his hat, and went out with a wandering look. Before the end of the day he was dead—shot at the barricade.

Marius had left M. Gillenormand's house filled with immense despair. He walked about the streets until two o'clock in the morning and then went to Courfeyrac's lodgings and threw himself on his mattress. When he awoke Courfeyrac said to him—"Are you coming to General Lamarque's funeral?"

It seemed to him as if Courfeyrac were talking Chinese and made no reply, so that his room-mate and other excited members of the Friends of the A B C, who had gathered there, voted him a churlish boor, who was worthy only to be let alone, and then they hurried away together—whither, he did not care to enquire. Marius himself went out shortly after them, and put in his pockets the loaded pistols which Javert had intrusted to him at the affair of February 3 in the Maison Gorbeau.

The whole day he wandered about, hoped for nothing, feared nothing. He awaited the evening with a feverish impatience, for he had but one clear idea left, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness was now his sole future, after which came shadow. At nine precisely he was at the Rue Plumet, as he promised Cosette. Marius removed the railing and rushed into the garden. Cosette was not at the place where she usually waited for him, and he crossed the garden, and went to the niche near the terrace, where they had so often sat, hand in hand, through golden hours.

"She is waiting for me there," he said to himself.

But, alas! Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes and saw that the shutters of the house were closed; he walked around the garden and the garden was deserted. Mad with love, terrified, exasperated with grief and anxiety, he rapped at the shutters, like a master who returns home at a late hour, risking seeing them suddenly open and Fauchelevent's face appear, frowningly demanding what was wanted there at that unseemly hour, when all honest men were at home.



MARCEAU SELLING HIS LAST BOOK

"Cosette!" he cried, "Cosette!" There was no answer and it was all over; there was no one in the garden, no one in the house.

Marius fixed his desperate eyes on this mournful house, which was as black, as silent and more empty than a tomb. He gazed at the stone bench on which he had spent so many adorable hours by Cosette's side; then he sat down on the garden-steps, with his heart full of gentleness and resolution; he blessed his love in his heart, and said to himself that all left him was to die. Alas! who is there that has not experienced these things? When we emerge from the azure why does life go on?



THE FIFTH OF JUNE, 1832

tant, holding in his hand a branch of flowering laburnum which he had picked on the heights of Belleville, noticed in the shop of a seller of curiosities an old holster-pistol. He threw his branch on the pavement and cried:

"Mother What's-your-name, I'll borrow your machine."

And he ran off with the pistol. It was little Gavroche going to the wars, singing the *marsellaise* at the top of his voice.

(To be continued)

All at once he heard a voice which seemed to come from the street, crying through the trees — "Monsieur Marius!"

He drew himself up guardedly; the voice was not entirely strange to him, and resembled Eponine's rough, hoarse accents.

"Hilloh?" he answered.

"Are you there, Monsieur Marius?"

"Yes. What is wanted?"

"Monsieur Marius," the voice resumed, "your friends are waiting for you at the barricade in the Rue de la Chancrerie."

Marius ran to the railings, pulled aside the shifting bar, passed his head through, and saw some one, who seemed to be a young man, running away in the gloaming?

At this moment a ragged lad who was coming down the Rue Menilmont-



Drawn by Woldemar Friederich

THE WILD HUNTSMAN. XII.—HUNTING UNTIL DOOMSDAY

The wicked nobleman's wish and the curse of the outraged monk have been realized. Fierce figures, howling in riotous merriment, rush through the night air; and the cowering people of the forest cross themselves in terror.